

# **THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN FIGHTING CORRUPTION IN OUR SOCIETY**

**BY**

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## PROTOCOLS:

1. My gratitude goes to the organizers of this great occasion, the Code of Conduct Bureau, an institution charged with the responsibility of monitoring and checking the behaviours of Public Office holders. I congratulate the Bureau, not only for its initiative for the training of public officers in that regard, but also for the numerous benefits and achievements derived from the outcome of the exercise, especially in maintaining high standard of morality in the conduct of Government business, which by extension instills rule of law, public morality, accountability, good character, efficiency and effectiveness in our Public service.
2. It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to be invited as Special guest and to participate in presenting a paper at this great and historic occasion. I humbly accepted to talk on the subject matter, not only because of my professional background or my current position as Grand Khadi of the Sharia Court of Appeal (FCT) Abuja, but due to the importance of the topic and the magnitude of the devastating nature of corrupt practices in our society.
3. The Purpose of this paper, therefore, is to rehash the numerous social problems and challenges that our country faces as a result of the menace of corruption and highlight some practical and specific solutions to the problems from Islamic perspective.
4. ***Based on the above background, I wish to briefly talk on the role of Islam on fighting corruption in our society.***
5. Mr. Chairman Sir, Let me begin first by defining the two terms, the Code of Conduct and corruption. This is because the occasion is organized by the Code of Code Bureau, the main body checking the corrupt practices in our society. A code of conduct is defined as a set of rules outlining the responsibilities of or proper practice for an individual, party or organization. Related concepts include ethical codes and honour codes". Similarly, the International Federation of Accountants provided the following working definition: "Principles, values, standards, or rules of behavior that guide the decision, procedures and systems of an organization in a way that (a) contributes to the welfare of its key stakeholders, and (b) respects the rights of all constituents affected by its operations."

6. In philosophical, theological and moral discussions, the term corruption has been defined as spiritual or moral impurity or deviation from an ideal. In economy, corruption is payment for services or material which the recipient is not due, under law. This may be called bribery, kickback, or baksheesh.
7. In general sense, corruption is highly related to materialistic tendencies due to real needs caused by desire to live beyond one's means, which tends to manifest in the desire to become distinguished among one's peers.
8. While according to Islamic teaching, any action and deed of mankind that flout justice or rule of law at home, place of work, school premises, playground, etc are an act of corruption.
9. Islam, therefore, is a complete and comprehensive way of life; it is universal in its scope and in its applicability. Islam sets standard of divinely guided social justice, moral value, ethical identity, political system and transparent economic norms. Islam propagates the above through education and knowledge under the two sources of Sharia, the Qur'an and Hadith.

Qur'an as the first source of Islamic Law, it is a revealed book of Allah, a book of knowledge and guidance, revealed to mankind to get educated, follow the path of Allah, through learning from its chapters and observe Allah's command. A Muslim society therefore succeeds only by gaining and using the knowledge for proper cause and pleasure of the creator Allah the Almighty.

Qur'an is a comprehensive book of guidance. It contains a complete book of universal standard, it is superior to any other faith, in that it guarantees happiness in man's life. It has unshakable believe system with moral and practical laws with source firmly codified in the Holy Qur'an. As Qur'an (Chapter 25 Verse 33) Clarifies that:

*"And no question they bring to you  
but we reveal to you the truth and  
best of explanation (thereof)"*

10. Based on the above, it is important to note, that Islam is the only religion which identifies corruption as a moral and ethical problem of an individual. Islam also provides the ability to foster self – restrain through the knowledge of Qur’anic ethical framework for human behavior, e.g. by applying justice, equity, honesty, fear of Allah, decency, moral values and accountability. This is because Islam has an ethical component often derived from the Holy Qur’an as clearly indicated below in Chapter 11 Verse 85 that:

*“O my people give full measure and  
Full weight with equity and defraud  
Not people of their things and  
Commit not inequity in the earth  
causing disorder”*

The above Qur’anic verse shows not only the remarkable role Islam demonstrates in denouncing the evils of corruption but also promotes morality and justice for the betterment of mankind, rule of law, environmental balance, peace and harmony in the society. Islam only focuses on promoting and enforcing a code of universal values which defines the relationship that humans have with Allah and all creation among which are justice, equity, which enhance not only human happiness but also brings transformation with a clean and honest society. Qur’an (Chapter 38 Verse 28) states that:

*“Shall we treat those who believe  
And work deeds of righteousness, the  
Same as those who mischief on  
Earth? Shall we treat those who  
Guard against evil, the same as those  
Who turn aside from the right?”*

11. Furthermore, Islam eradicates the corruption menace through justice, which is the central value. Islamic social justice instill fear and equitable distribution of wealth through proper administration of Zakkat, provision of basic needs/necessities and protection of the weak from economic exploitation by the strong.

Islam totally discourages all sinful and unlawful accumulation of wealth. As Prophet (PBUH) enjoin Muslims to desist from illegal enrichment of themselves as shown in the Hadith below:

*“the flesh that grows out of unlawful income has no place in the hereafter but hell”*

Another Prophetic hadith further indicated that Prophet (PBUH) was said to have frown at a zakat collector who was involved in the abuse of office by enriching himself illegally. Prophet (PBUH) remarked that:

*“What rights have you to put aside something that does not belong to you. If you were to remain in your father’s house would you get what you are taking?”*

12. Islamically, corruption is regarded as human behavior due moral and ethical problems. The Holy Qur’an further differentiates between people on the basis of their behavior and ethics in relation to corruption. Qur’an state that:

*“Shall we treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, the same as those who mischief on earth? Shall we treat those who guard against evil, the same as those who turn aside from the right?”  
(Chapter 38 Verse 28)*

13. Islam provides a moral framework for fighting corruption in our society. A Muslim faithful is enjoined to be broad about his morals. Muslims should remain conscious of Allah, whether in private or in public, speak justly, whether angry or pleased, show moderation both when dealing with poor or rich, Muslims should command what is right, doing good and having the right belief go hand in hand in Islam. The most fundamental characteristic of a Muslim is piety, humility and fear of Allah, the creator.

Islam teaches Muslims to be in control of their passion and desires. Muslims must not be virtuous but they must also enjoin virtue. They must not only refrain from evil and vice but they must also forbid them. They should be morally healthy and must also contribute to the moral health of the society.

Morally, Islam addresses every aspect of a Muslim's Life, from corruption to walking on the street, from neighbourliness to international relations, from leadership to followership, etc. Islam therefore calls upon Muslims to behave in a just and ethical manner that is conducive to sustainable development. On the quality of the above aspect of life, the Holy Qur'an states that:

*"and swell not thy check (for pride)  
at men nor walk in insolence  
through the earth; for Allah leaveth  
not any arrogance boaster"  
(Chapter 31 verse 18-19).*

The Holy Qur'an further says:  
*"do not swallow up your property  
among yourselves by false means  
nor offer it as a bribe to the people in  
authority so that you may swallow  
up other people's property  
unlawfully while you know"  
(Chapter 2 Verse 188).*

14. Similarly, effective and efficient implementation of sharia also provides framework for anti-corruption initiatives in the context of Islamic society. This is because the Islamic political system and leadership position of power in the Muslim society are accountable to their Lord Allah the Creator.

Islam teaches that leaders are servant of their followers. They are recommended to seek for the welfare of their subjects and guide them towards what is good. As the Prophet (PBUH) declares that:

*"A ruler has been entrusted with  
affairs of Muslims but make no  
endeavor (for their material and*

*moral uplift) and not sincerely  
concerned (for their welfare) will not  
enter paradise along with them.”  
(SahihBukhari 1:82).*

15. Another Islamic approach in fighting corruption is through transparent and honest leadership restraining from evil, illegal enrichment or any other form of corrupt practices prevented by Islam as Prophet (PBUH) declares that:

*“whoso from you is appointed by us  
to a position of authority and he  
conceals from us a needle or  
something smaller than that, it will  
be misappropriation (of public  
funds) and (he) will (have to)  
produce it on the day of judgement.”  
(Sahih Muslim No. 847).*

16. Generally Islam teaches that humankind is the steward to Allah on earth and is therefore accountable to Allah for their deeds and choices. Such responsibilities and accountability provides the motivation not only to abide by Islamic moral and ethical code but restrain mankind from any act of corrupt practices.

The Islamic central concept of accountability, justice and ethical manner not only provides the foundation of ethical transparency and accountability but corruption cannot continue to grow in a society of believers sharing a common faith with common knowledge of hereafter. As the Prophetic Hadith warns that:

*“Beware of bribery for verily it is a  
sheer infidelity, and the briber will  
not even smell the fragrance of  
paradise”*

In conclusion, corruption is a serious and age old menace which constitutes devastating impact on our society. It covers a wide range of illegal practices

which undermines fear of God, morality, decency, social justice and good governance, rule of law, harmony, peace, progress and development. However, Islam provides a complete and comprehensive universal guidance and perfect solution to all human problems as clearly indicated above.

Thank you, may God bless us all.